

## Things to note before you start treatment



Your doctor will discuss what albumin blood product is needed, as well as:

- ♦ its benefits and potential risks
- ♦ any treatment alternatives.



Your doctor will provide you with time to ask questions.



If you agree to treatment, you will need to sign a consent form to confirm you are happy to proceed.



Each bottle of albumin may take up to four hours. The time depends on what condition is being treated, the dose prescribed by your doctor and the concentration of the product.



Albumin blood products are usually given by a nurse in a hospital or day unit. During the infusion nurses will monitor you, including your heart rate and blood pressure.



**Always report any symptoms or concerns to your healthcare professional. All reactions are reported to New Zealand Blood Service (NZBS).**

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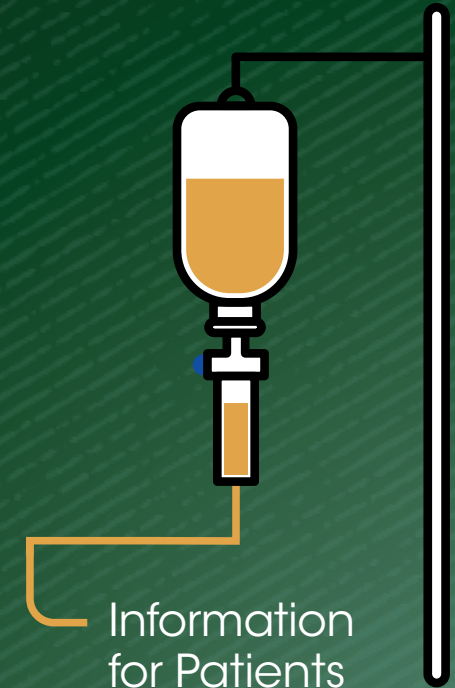
Leaflet prepared and provided by New Zealand Blood Service,  
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**NZBLOOD**

Your guide to blood transfusion

# Intravenous albumin blood products



Information  
for Patients

**NZBLOOD**  
Te Raukōwhiri Te Rau Kōwhiri

## What is albumin?

Put simply, albumin is a protein produced naturally by the liver. It is the most common protein found in blood and helps manage the distribution of water and other substances in your body.

## What are albumin blood products?

They are clear, pale yellow to lime, intravenous (IV) fluids, which contain *albumin proteins* collected from the plasma of New Zealand's voluntary blood donors. The fluid itself is known as a *natural colloid*, because the albumin proteins are mixed ('suspended') into a solution. The plasma is tested, processed, purified and then batched into glass bottles.

Two albumin blood products are available in New Zealand:

- ♦ **ALBUREX® 5 NZ** – a 5% colloid solution, with a similar concentration, or 'albumin protein content', to blood itself
- ♦ **ALBUREX® 20 NZ** – a 20% colloid solution, four times the concentration of blood, with a higher 'albumin protein content'.

## Who may need albumin blood products?

A variety of medical conditions may benefit from the use of albumin blood products, including low blood volume, low levels of albumin in the blood or as a replacement fluid in therapeutic plasma exchange. Albumin blood products are often combined with other treatments.

## ALBUREX® 5 NZ may be needed:

- ♦ After severe blood loss, as one of the IV fluids used to correct blood volume
- ♦ As a replacement fluid during therapeutic plasma exchange, a clinical procedure needed by some people with uncommon or rare disorders.

## ALBUREX® 20 NZ may be needed for:

- ♦ Cirrhosis, especially if you're waiting for a liver transplant
- ♦ Other serious disorders that affect the liver, including severe infections and ascites (a condition where too much fluid collects in your abdomen)
- ♦ Low levels of albumin in your blood due to kidney disease, bowel disorders or severe burns
- ♦ Other rare conditions.

## How are albumin blood products given?

As an intravenous infusion, directly into the bloodstream via a drip (cannula) placed in your vein. Sometimes they might be used as priming fluids for procedures such as cardiopulmonary bypass or renal dialysis.

## How often might I need treatment?

When *ALBUREX® 5 NZ* or *ALBUREX® 20 NZ* is given to replace the albumin levels in your blood, the benefit is short-term. The infusion reduces problems associated with a lack of albumin, providing relief for several days to a week, but they do not cure or treat the condition causing low albumin.

## What are possible side effects?

Side effects are rare and can include:

- ♦ A drop in blood pressure. This may be more common if you are taking certain high blood pressure medicines, e.g. ACE inhibitors.
- ♦ A rise in blood pressure and pulse. This is more common with *ALBUREX® 20 NZ*, which is more concentrated.
- ♦ Allergic reactions. Severe reactions are very rare but require urgent medical care. Symptoms may include wheezing, difficulty breathing, chest tightness, rash, facial swelling or low blood pressure.

## How safe are albumin blood products?

The collection and processing of albumin proteins from plasma is strictly controlled and regulated to ensure the product you receive is safe. All blood donors in New Zealand must be in good health and meet strict health and lifestyle screening criteria before they can donate plasma.

Every plasma donation must test negative for blood-borne infections, including syphilis, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV).

When albumin proteins are extracted from plasma, viral inactivation and removal are used to reduce the potential risk of transmitting disease. Viral infections such as HIV/AIDS, syphilis, HBV or HCV and prion infections such as Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease (CJD) or variant CJD have never been spread via albumin blood products.